LOCAL NEWS

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### For Small-Income Owners

## *Home Grant Boost Hinted*

Waldo Skillings, close friend of Premier Bennett, appeared to hint yesterday at the possibility of the $28 provincial home-owners' grant being increased for small-income owners of old homes.

Chairman of the court of revision on Victoria assessments, Mr. Skillings said at one point during hearings that he felt an adjustment would be coming along in the future, that something would have to be done about the old homes.

Later, the Rev. Laura Butler, appearing with a pensioner who said she found it difficult to save enough money for taxes, asked the court if there wasn't some humane channel through which this widow and other pensioners could keep their homes.

The only way, Mr. Skillings suggested, would be through an increase in the home-owners' grant to "one specific category" of owner.

He recalled that there had been criticism of the $28 grant because it was given only to home-owners, but suggested that pensioners could organize an appeal to the government.

Joseph Casey, former reeve of Saanich and another member of the court, said he thought Mr. Skillings had made a good suggestion.

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*Welfare*

## Skillings Cabinet Bound?

Speculation about whether Waldo Skillings will be named new minister of welfare or to another cabinet post was made in the legislature yesterday by Gordon Dowding (CCF-Burnaby).

Mr. Dowding questioned the reason Waldo Skillings accompanied the premier on his trip to Ottawa.

"Is he the B.C. government representative, or is he going to be the premier's new executive assistant or created a minister of travel?" asked Mr. Dowding.

"I guess the only place he didn't go was in the chamber of the Prime Minister. Maybe we have a new announcement pending . . . is someone going to resign over there and Mr. Skillings become a minister?

"I hope we find out before the budget," Mr. Dowding said.

WALDO SKILLINGS
. . . they did so much

*Assessment Study Begins*

## Oldsters Can't Pay But Court Can't Help

A court of revision on assessments has no power to consider inability to pay taxes, a sympathetic court repeatedly told complaining ratepayers yesterday at city hall.

But just as frequently, as the court worked its way through the first 30 of nearly 130 city cases on its list, it heard, "I can't afford to pay more taxes."

That, and more touching variations:

"I'm a disability pensioner. That doesn't count for anything now, but it counted when we went over in 1914."

"I'm a widow, and even with the $28 home-owner's grant, I find it difficult to save enough for taxes."

"We came into our home 46 years ago when it was finished. We brought up our children and put them through school without assistance from the government, like the family allowance. It comes hard to build extra fancy schools. . . ."

But the court answered that it could consider only the fairness of the assessments, or valuations, in relation to other assessments and to market values in the past four years.

**FEELS IT KEENLY**

"No one feels more keenly than I do the position of you old-timers who had so much of the building up of our province and city," chairman Waldo Skillings told the couple last quoted.

"But we can only consider whether your property has been fairly assessed. The schools may have too many frills, but the court can't adjudicate on that."

Another 30 cases will be heard by the three-man court today in the Knights of Pythias Hall, 723 Cormorant.

## *'Come Home Joe' Quip Cheers Court of Revision*

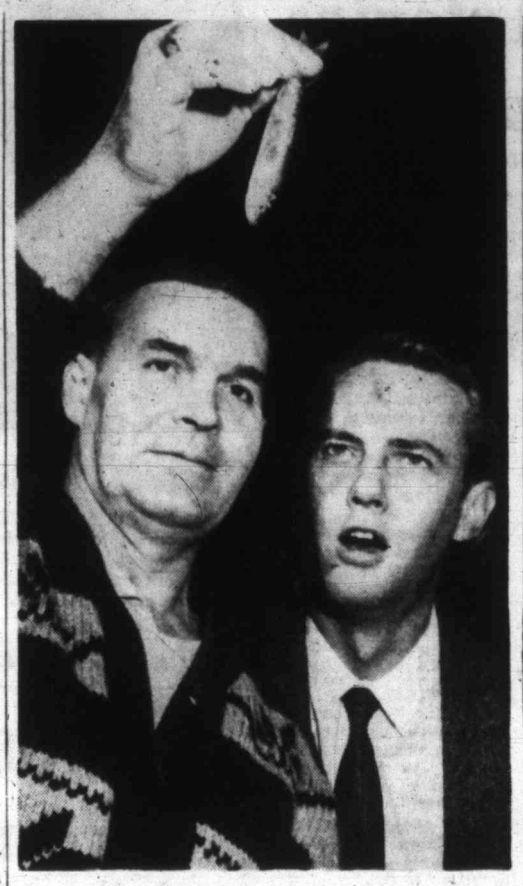
**Occasional laughter cheered up the proceedings yesterday as a court of revision considered complaints about city assessments.**

**A Burnside resident, for instance, claimed that billboards across the road were devaluing her property.**

**"Now I look out on 'Come Home Joe,' whoever he is," she said.**

**The chuckles had already started when a cry of "That's me!" came from Joseph Casey, former reeve of Saanich and a member of the court.**

**The court refused to lower the assessment.**



### This Won't Help Much

Hoping to supplement his "pensioner's diet", Colonist reporter Ted Shackleford went down to Gorge yesterday to get some tips on herring fishing. Before his stint of living for month on $55 ends, he expects to do better than did Jim Erdman, 654 Pine. Many old pensioners regularly catch their breakfast just below Gorge bridge. — (Colonist photo.)

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### They Wouldn't Wait

## *I May Cross Herring Off My List*

**Colonist reporter Ted Shackleford has been assigned to live on $55 for a month to discover how senior citizens on old-age assistance payments live and what their problems are.**

**He will be available in The Daily Colonist office—EV 3-4111 — between 4 and 5 p.m. each day.**

**By TED SHACKLEFORD**

Maybe the Gorge herring get up earlier than I do, but by the time I got there yesterday afternoon they'd all gone somewhere else.

I had hoped to get a few tips from some of the pensioners who fish there regularly, but even they had gone. Jim Erdman, 654 Pine Street, was there but he only had a four-inch herring to show me.

I guess I'll just have to cross herring off my menu unless I can get down there earlier. I'll try again soon.

**MEALS OUT**

Last night I had the first of the two meals out that I have allowed myself during this month.

It was the most international meal I've ever had. It began with hors d'oeuvres of Polish head cheese, Scotch broth, Swiss steak with Canadian vegetables and American blueberry pie with ice cream. Washed down with two cups of coffee.

It was the first hearty meal I've had since I began this assignment a week ago.

**BACK AGAIN**

Today I go right back again to my own cooking.

Breakfast yesterday morning was shredded wheat, two eggs with two slices of bacon and two cups of tea. Lunch consisted of three cinnamon buns (12 cents) and a 10-cent cup of hot chocolate from a vending machine.

I'm not too sure what I'll eat today, but breakfast will probably be the same as yesterday.

**LOT OF COMMENT**

The food list published yesterday has caused a lot of comment on the inclusion of liquid milk and butter. True, powdered milk and margarine can be bought more cheaply, but almost all the prices on the list are high, deliberately.

*Confidence*

## Two Votes Lost

British Columbia's Social Credit government handily weathered two non-confidence votes in the legislature yesterday.

After a bitter attack on Provincial Secretary Wesley Black, during which he charged Mr. Black with "deliberate suppression" of mental health information and the government with placing debt reduction before human lives, Gordon Dowding (CCF, Burnaby) moved the first non-confidence motion.

His motion stated that "this House has lost confidence in the government because of its failure to provide adequate mental health facilities and the refusal to keep the House accurately informed." Division was called and the motion was lost 34-13 with all opposition members voting in favor.

All Socred members voted against the motion, and George Gregory (Lib., Victoria) claimed that about a dozen Socreds returned after divisions had been called and had not even heard the motion, and did not know what they were voting against.

Oak Bay Liberal Archie Gibbs proposed the second non-confidence motion which read "that this House regrets that government advisers have expended borrowed monies and taxes in a wasteful manner; they have been inattentive to the serious financial position of civic governments and school boards; and they have responded with callous indifference to the most serious charges upon their integrity."

The hour was nearly 6 p.m. and a vote by voice was taken with the nays far outweighing the ayes.

## House To Sit Tonight

There will be a night sitting of the legislature tonight, possibly starting at 8.30 p.m., and it is thought likely there will be another late sitting Thursday night as MLAs rush to finish the Throne Speech debate so Premier Bennett can present the budget Friday afternoon.

Scheduled to speak this afternoon, starting at 2, are Irvine Corbett (SC-Yale), Tony Gargrave (CCF-Mackenzie), Provincial Secretary Wesley Black (SC-Nelson-Creston), and Gordon Gibson (SC-Delta).

This evening Bert Price (SC-Vancouver-Burrard), George Massey (SC-Delta) and Melvin Bryan (Ind-North Vancouver) are scheduled to speak.

Winding up the debate Thursday will be Randolph Harding (CCF-Kaslo-Slocan), Health Minister Eric Martin (SC-Vancouver-Burrard), Arthur Turner (CCF-Vancouver East) and Mines Minister Kenneth Kiernan (SC-Chilliwack).

### Around the Island

## *Building Bids Called For Duncan's Fairground*

DUNCAN — Tenders were called recently for the first two new buildings to be built on the new fair grounds, Tom Groves, member of the Cowichan Exhibition Planning Board, told the 91st annual meeting of the Cowichan Agricultural Society Saturday.

He said $60,500 had already been raised in cash or from guaranteed sources.

Directors elected include: T. D. Groves, Westholme; A. W. T. Evans, Somenos; D. C. Morton, Stratfords Crossing; Alan Stewart, Duncan; Peter Gronewold, Cowichan Station; and Eric Hodgson, Duncan.

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PORT ALBERNI — Picket line on the Municipal Hall project was averted when the city council took action to hold the contracting company to a "local labor" clause in the contract.

John Feser, financial secretary of the Carpenters' local attended council meeting Monday night, reporting that Alberni Valley tradesmen had been laid off and mainland men had been hired by the contractor.

Mayor Loran Jordon took action yesterday morning which resulted in the head of the contracting firm coming to the city from Vancouver. Two local men were hired for finishing work on the project, which is nearing completion.

At Alberni the work of demolishing the old Kitsuksis Creek bridge was halted briefly, yesterday, when the pile-drivers' union placed a picket line in protest against the job being carried on without a union bridgeman.

The dispute was settled within hours and the project of removing the old wooden structure continued.

The new concrete span was opened for traffic Monday.

PARKSVILLE — Jack Noel was installed as president of Mt. Arrowsmith branch 49, Canadian Legion, at a ceremony conducted by Ralph Gibson, past provincial president of the Legion at Parksville Legion hall.

Other officers installed were first vice-president, W. G. Symons; second vice-president, Eddie Jennings; secretary-treasurer, C. W. Bell; sergeant-at-arms, W. E. Barnum; branch chaplain, Rev. John Stainer and members of the executive committee, T. C. Tryon, William Woodruff, and retiring president, Walter Avery.

Zone Commander W. D. Clarke, of Nanaimo, had the honor of burning the mortgage on the Legion hall. In requesting Mr. Clarke to perform the ceremony the retiring president, Walter Avery commended all members who had made it possible to pay off a $1,200 debt during the past year.

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Upper Island members of the Victoria Laborers' Union have approved an agreement for a 24-cent-an-hour wage increase during the next two years.

Voting completed last night at Nanaimo "unanimously" backed the new proposed contract with the Heavy Construction Association of B.C.

President Earl B. Allen said about 150 men are affected. A contract for union members in Victoria has as yet not been agreed upon, he said.

Basic wage is raised from $1.95 to $2.07 March 31. Maximum will be $2.27, raised from $2.15.

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PARKSVILLE — Precipitation in the Parksville area for the month of January including snow, was 4.75 inches. The 10-year average is 4.22 inches. Highest temperature recorded for the month was on Jan. 25 when the mercury rose to 48 and the lowest temperature was on Jan. 4 when 11 above was recorded.

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NANAIMO — Recreation commission chairman Kenneth Alexander and John Dunham were named delegates from Nanaimo Rotary Club to attend a meeting called by Mayor Pete Maffeo to discuss access problems to the 25 lakes in the Nanaimo area. Meeting is slated for Friday.

PORT ALBERNI—Council will ask leave to appeal from the recent B.C. Appeal Court judgment which would deny the city's right to levy school taxes on land and improvements covered by the fixed assessment agreement.

Reasons for the judgment have not yet been received but, at Monday night's meeting authorization was given by council for preliminary action toward the appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

City solicitor E. A. Dinsmore asked for council's consent to seek leave to appeal.

Mayor Loran Jordon told Maurice Corbeil, Local 1-85, IWA vice-president, who had questioned the wisdom of an appeal, that proceedings can still be dropped if it is considered advisable when the court's written judgment is received.

Mr. Corbeil contended that a long-drawn-out Supreme Court case over the school tax issue would prevent action being taken toward breaking the fixed assessment agreement in its entirety.

Gus Frigstad who told council it had been remiss if it had not issued taxation notice to Macmillan & Bloedel Ltd. on the actual value of the company's improvements on land covered by the agreement, was told by Mayor Jordon that legal opinion had been given to the effect that the agreement document is binding up to the point which the city is trying to prove in connection with school taxes.

City clerk H. D. Thain offered to give the complete history of the fixed assessment agreement and of the council's investigation of its legal status to any interested groups of individuals.

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NANAIMO—The second and last case to end the Spring Assizes will open today in Nanaimo. Appearing before Mr. Justice Macfarlane will be Laik Singh, charged with criminal negligence in a car accident near Lake Cowichan.

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NANAIMO — Dr. R. H. Creighton was elected president of the newly-formed Nanaimo Arts Council.

PARKSVILLE — Funeral was held from St. Anne's Anglican Church, French Creek, for a pioneer resident of Parksville, Elizabeth Ann Harrison, who passed away at the Fort Hospital at Comox where she had been a patient for the past six months.

One of the few remaining pioneers of Parksville, Mrs. Harrison was the widow of the late Hanley K. Harrison who predeceased her in 1957.

Mrs. Harrison was the first B.C. woman to be honored with a life membership in the Women's Institute of Canada for her services and was a charter member of the local W.I.

Surviving are three sons, William K., Victoria, Eric W., Great Central Lake, Stuart A., Hamilton; one daughter, Mrs. Charles M. Stewart, Qualicum Beach, six grandsons and one granddaughter and a sister, Mrs. Edith Pattinson, Parksville. The funeral service was conducted by the Rev. John Stainer.

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PORT ALBERNI—Building permits totalling $193,080 were issued in Port Alberni in January, according to the report of building inspector William Fraser.

Except for an $11,000 dwelling and an $80 porch, the shopping centre project at Tenth Avenue and Redford Street accounted for the total amount.

In January of last year building permits amounted to $96,600.

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NANAIMO—A framed certificate from Premier Bennett which marked the holding of a full provincial cabinet session in Nanaimo last summer, was exhibited yesterday by Mayor Pete Maffeo.

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NANAIMO — Former Vancouver Island sportsman and Commercial Hotel employee Robert McIntyre died in Nanaimo General Hospital Sunday. He was 49.

Mr. McIntyre was best known as a boxer and wrestler. Funeral services will be held from Westwood funeral home at 1.30 p.m. today.

### *Professor Talks On 'Democracy'*

S. G. Pettit, professor of history at Victoria College, will discuss "Democracy," at the annual meeting of the Friends of the Victoria Public Library Association at 8 p.m. tonight in the library music room.

*Socreds Told:*

## Keep Your Word!

The Socred government has been asked to live up to its "promise" to institute a program of chronic hospital care under the benefits of B.C. Hospital Insurance.

Demand was made by the B.C. Progressive Conservative Association following the unanimous endorsement of a resolution presented by the Saanich Peninsula Progressive Conservative Association.

In speaking to the resolution, which was forwarded to Health and Welfare Minister Eric Martin, Mrs. Nora Lindsay, Saanich group chairman, said:

"It is high time that the minister of health and welfare honored his obligations to the people of B.C. and made available proper facilities for the treatment and rehabilitation of chronically-ill patients.

"Such a program will relieve the acute hospital bed shortage but, even more important, will enable chronic patients to obtain the type of treatment that will make it possible for them to retain a greater degree of independence."

## Society Elects Mrs. Livesay

Mrs. E. E. Livesay was elected president of the Vancouver Island John Howard Society at the annual meeting Monday.

M. V. Close and Newell Morrison were elected vice-presidents.

Directors include: Mrs. Betty Botterell, Michael Fraser, Alex Hendry, Dr. H. J. Lewis, Torrey McCall, Frank Steggles, Peter Taylor, Work Point chaplain A. J. McDonald, Rodney Taylor, Alfred Toone, Dr. C. D. Orchard and retiring president Hugh Ramsay.

*Brief Presented to Bonner*

## Driver Persecution Ratepayers' Claim

Aged drivers are being persecuted by Victoria's Motor Vehicles Branch, claims the Vancouver Island Ratepayers' Association.

A brief citing the "unnecessary and undesirable control" over drivers from 65 on was presented to Attorney-General Robert Bonner by association president George Bonner and vice-president W. C. Hamilton, Port Alberni alderman.

"We were well received by the attorney-general," said Mr. Bonner, "and he promised to do all he could to help older drivers."

Particularly hit in the brief were the growing list of tests and medical examinations for senior-citizen drivers.

The medical document itself was described as "astounding, amazing, stupefying, flabbergasting."

"The record shows," the brief said, "that older drivers have given little or no trouble as compared with the younger generation who are the cause of grave concern to us all in the matter of so many tragic and disastrous road accidents."

It was also urged that driver-examiners be more courteous.

"They should be required to show affability, kindness and cheerfulness when dealing with the elderly driver, avoiding all official abruptness.

"This should be a must in their training, the brief said.

## *Blood Flows*

**Victoria blood bank received 125 pints of blood yesterday during the first day of the three-day Red Cross drive.**

**The clinic at Red Cross House, 1046 Fort, will be held today from 1.30 to 4.30 p.m. and 7 to 9.30 p.m.**

**Final clinic will be held tomorrow at Canadian Services College, Royal Roads.**

### Key Taken First, Then Car It Fit

Melrose Service Ltd., 1609 Fort Street, are wondering if a "key" thief returned to find a car to match the key.

A car stolen from their lot Monday night matched one of several keys stolen when a thief broke into their building on Jan. 27, police were told yesterday.